



General Assembly

January Session, 2003

**Committee Bill No. 5865**

LCO No. 4427

Referred to Committee on Human Services

Introduced by:  
(HS)

***AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-688c of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
3 *1, 2003*):

4 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer, in  
5 accordance with sections 17b-688h and 17b-688i, an employment  
6 services program for the purpose of providing employment services to  
7 recipients of benefits under the temporary assistance for needy  
8 families program pursuant to Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Said  
9 program shall include the provision of employment services to  
10 recipients of temporary family assistance that will enable them to  
11 become employed and independent of cash assistance within twenty-  
12 one months of receipt of temporary family assistance. The  
13 commissioner shall apply for a federal waiver, if required, to: (1)  
14 Permit the maximum number of temporary family assistance  
15 recipients to satisfy federally defined work activity requirements  
16 through participation in educational activities that are minimally

17 directed toward the attainment of a high school diploma or its  
18 equivalent or vocational education training, and (2) include  
19 educational activities as an activity that counts toward the first twenty  
20 hours of participation in federally defined work activity requirements  
21 for temporary family assistance recipients.

22 Sec. 2. Section 17b-112 of the general statutes, as amended by section  
23 13 of public act 03-2, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
24 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003*):

25 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary  
26 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be  
27 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
28 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
29 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
30 1996. Under the temporary family assistance program, benefits shall be  
31 provided to a family for not longer than twenty-one months, except as  
32 provided in subsections [(b) and] (c) and (d) of this section. For the  
33 purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month time limit, months of  
34 assistance received on and after January 1, 1996, pursuant to time  
35 limits under the aid to families with dependent children program,  
36 shall be included. For purposes of this section, "family" means one or  
37 more individuals who apply for or receive assistance together under  
38 the temporary family assistance program.

39 (b) All individuals who apply for benefits under the temporary  
40 family assistance program, upon making such application, shall be  
41 administered an assessment to determine the presence of barriers that  
42 may impede such individual from engaging in employment; such  
43 barriers to employment shall include, but not be limited to, severe  
44 mental or physical health problems, one or more severe learning  
45 disabilities, substance abuse or addiction, lack of available child care,  
46 the need to care for a disabled or elderly family member, and domestic  
47 violence.

48 [(b)] (c) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family

49 from such time-limited benefits pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
50 section for circumstances including, but not limited to: (1) A family  
51 with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or of an advanced  
52 age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no other nonexempt  
53 caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with a needy caretaker  
54 relative who is needed in the home because of the incapacity of  
55 another member of the household, if there is no other nonexempt  
56 caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a caretaker  
57 relative who is not legally responsible for the dependent children in  
58 the household if such relative's needs are not considered in calculating  
59 the amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt caretaker  
60 relative in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker relative caring  
61 for a child who is under one year of age and who was born not more  
62 than ten months after the family's enrollment if there is no other  
63 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family with a  
64 pregnant or postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has indicated  
65 that such relative is unable to work and there is no other nonexempt  
66 caretaker relative in the household; (6) a family with a caretaker  
67 relative determined by the commissioner to be unemployable and  
68 there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; and  
69 (7) minor parents attending and satisfactorily completing high school  
70 or high school equivalency programs.

71 [(c)] (d) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits pursuant to  
72 subsection (a) of this section may petition the Commissioner of Social  
73 Services for six-month extensions of such benefits. The commissioner  
74 shall grant not more than [two] three extensions to such family who  
75 has made a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the  
76 program and despite such effort has a total family income at a level  
77 below the payment standard, or has encountered circumstances  
78 preventing employment including, but not limited to: (1) Domestic  
79 violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2) other  
80 circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner shall  
81 disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining applicable  
82 family income. The commissioner may grant a fourth or a subsequent

83 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of  
84 the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in  
85 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason  
86 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated  
87 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of  
88 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or  
89 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,  
90 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral  
91 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per  
92 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less  
93 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; or  
94 (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per  
95 week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the  
96 adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum  
97 number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to  
98 care for a disabled member of the adult's household, provided the  
99 adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving  
100 responsibilities permit. Families receiving temporary family assistance  
101 shall be notified by the department of the right to petition for such  
102 extensions. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the  
103 commissioner shall not provide benefits under the state's temporary  
104 family assistance program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one  
105 month benefit limit and has received benefits beginning on or after  
106 October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that family's receiving more  
107 than sixty months of time-limited benefits unless that family  
108 experiences domestic violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L.  
109 104-193. For the purpose of calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A  
110 month shall count toward the limit if the family receives assistance for  
111 any day of the month, and (II) a month in which a family receives  
112 temporary family assistance benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction  
113 other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

114 [(d)] (e) Medicaid eligibility shall be extended for two years to a  
115 family who becomes ineligible for cash assistance while employed or a  
116 family with an adult who, within six months of becoming ineligible,

117 becomes employed.

118     [(e)] (f) Under said program (1) no family shall be eligible that has  
119 total gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in  
120 the calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and  
121 previously eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because  
122 of receipt of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who  
123 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of  
124 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal  
125 poverty level; (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an infant  
126 is born after the initial ten months of participation in the program shall  
127 be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the average  
128 incremental difference between the amounts paid per each family size;  
129 and (3) a disqualification penalty shall be established for failure to  
130 cooperate with the biometric identifier system. Except when  
131 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant  
132 to subsection [(c)] (d) of this section, the commissioner shall disregard  
133 the first fifty dollars per month of income attributable to child support  
134 that a family receives in determining eligibility and benefit levels for  
135 temporary family assistance.

136     [(f)] (g) A family receiving assistance under said program shall  
137 cooperate with child support enforcement, under title IV-D of the  
138 Social Security Act. A family shall be ineligible for benefits for failure  
139 to cooperate with child support enforcement.

140     [(g)] (h) A family leaving assistance at the end of (1) said twenty-  
141 one-month time limit, including a family with income above the  
142 payment standard, or (2) the sixty-month limit shall have an interview  
143 for the purpose of being informed of services that may continue to be  
144 available to such family, including employment services available  
145 through the Labor Department. Said interview shall contain a  
146 determination of benefits available to [said] such family provided by  
147 the Department of Social Services, such benefits shall include optional  
148 administrative assistance from the department to such family for

149 purposes of establishing a savings account with a financial institution  
150 in the state. At the option of a family establishing a savings account  
151 pursuant to this subsection, the department shall be permitted to  
152 electronically transfer into such account, the last month of program  
153 benefits received by such family. Said interview shall also include a  
154 determination of whether such family is eligible for food stamps or  
155 Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be made to such a family for  
156 services and benefits including, but not limited to, the earned income  
157 tax credit, rental subsidies emergency housing, employment services  
158 and energy assistance.

159 [(h)] (i) An applicant or recipient of temporary family assistance  
160 who is adversely affected by a decision of the Commissioner of Social  
161 Services may request and shall be provided a hearing in accordance  
162 with section 17b-60.

163 [(i)] (j) The commissioner may continue to operate under all or  
164 portions of the federal waivers granted under Section 1115 of the Social  
165 Security Act for the demonstration entitled "Reach For Jobs First".  
166 Notwithstanding continuation of the provisions of said federal  
167 waivers, the commissioner shall continue the evaluation of the  
168 effectiveness of the temporary family assistance program and may  
169 continue to utilize a control group using different program  
170 requirements.

171 [(j)] (k) The commissioner shall report, annually on or before  
172 November fifteenth, to the joint standing committees of the General  
173 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and  
174 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies on the funding  
175 requirements necessary to support the programs funded by the  
176 temporary assistance for needy families block grant.

177 [(k)] (l) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement  
178 policies and procedures necessary for the purposes of this section  
179 while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures in  
180 regulation form, provided the commissioner prints notice of intention

181 to adopt the regulations in the Connecticut Law Journal within twenty  
 182 days of implementing such policies and procedures. Final regulations  
 183 shall be submitted to the legislative regulation review committee no  
 184 later than November 15, 1997. Policies and procedures implemented  
 185 pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time final  
 186 regulations are effective.

187 Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112b of the general statutes is  
 188 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
 189 *1, 2003*):

190 (a) An applicant or recipient who is a past or present victim of  
 191 domestic violence or at risk of further domestic violence, pursuant to  
 192 subsection (c) of section 17b-112a, shall, for good cause: (1) Be excused  
 193 from failing to participate in a work activity; or (2) be exempted from  
 194 child support enforcement requirements pursuant to subsection [(f)]  
 195 (g) of section 17b-112. Such an applicant or recipient may, for good  
 196 cause, be granted an extension of cash assistance beyond twenty-one  
 197 months, provided the domestic violence experienced is of sufficient  
 198 magnitude to reasonably render the individual unable to obtain or  
 199 maintain employment.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2003</i>
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2003</i>

***Statement of Purpose:***

To improve the temporary family assistance program by: (1) Providing a barriers to employment assessment to all program applicants; (2) providing benefit recipients with greater opportunity to satisfy the work requirements through completion of educational and vocational training programs; and (3) providing benefit recipients with administrative assistance in the establishment of savings accounts.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*

Co-Sponsors: REP. WALKER, 93rd Dist.; REP. KIRKLEY-BEY, 5th Dist.  
SEN. HANDLEY, 4th Dist.

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